

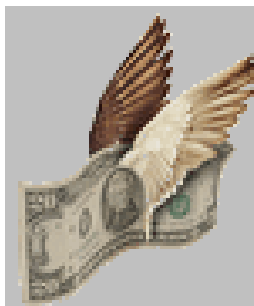
BE AWARE OF... *PERSONAL ITEM THEFT*

Editor: Tim Miller



The following letter was submitted to the ES&H Section along with the author's encouragement to place it in this publication so that others might be made aware of the potential for theft on the Fermilab site.

"You know the old saying, 'You never know how it really feels until it happens to you?' Well until you are the victim of a theft at work, you cannot know the sense of betrayal and frustration that one feels. On December 14, 1998 between 9 and 10 a.m., my billfold was stolen from my purse in an unsecured file drawer of my office while I was in another department.



Since my personal experience, I have encountered several other employees who have shared with me their own on-site experiences. They have told me about the usual stuff – wallets, purses, cellular phones. But would you believe that even your coat isn't safe? And of course there is government property such as pagers, computers, and calculators that occasionally get reported to Security.



Before this incident, I was a very trusting employee. While I never was so complacent as to leave unsecured property in plain view on my office desktop, I certainly never expected that someone might target me for this kind of crime. In my particular case, police investigators believe that my billfold was handed off or sold to an accomplice who, by 4 p.m. that afternoon, had fraudulently used my credit cards and spent over \$2,300. Unfortunately it took this incident for me to realize that Fermilab is merely a microcosm of the outside world, complete with some of its more negative elements.

Publishing my letter will, perhaps, heighten the awareness of others and may for a time prevent another theft from occurring. Those with offices near the back staircases of Wilson Hall should be particularly careful since a thief can easily slip quickly out of the building through this exit. If you have personal items stolen from you while at work, please report it to Security. Fermilab is a special place to work and I would personally like to see it remain that way; but safer and more secure for all of us."

-- Elaine Phillips, BSS

Thefts of personal property reported to the Security Department occur at the rate of about once each month. This rate has been essentially constant over the last five years so it shouldn't be assumed that thefts are necessarily on the rise at Fermilab. By the same token, however, these rates have not diminished and so it remains imperative that each employee use good judgement about securing both their personal and assigned government property.

During the past year, approximately \$6,000 worth of personal property was reported stolen in twelve separate incident reports. Among the missing items were:

- Radio/Displayer
- Billfolds and credit cards
- 2 Pagers
- Hydraulic jack
- Variable speed saw
- Various magazines & pens
- Socket set
- Personal computer
- 3 vacuum sweepers
- Pallet jack
- Ameritech Pay Telephone (ripped from the wall!)
- Change machine (including change)
- Cash

ES&H Updates - Personal Item Theft

*This message should be distributed to all employees via delivery of un-addressed copies to Fermilab mail stations.
Suggestions for ES&H message topics should be directed to Tim Miller at MS119, tmiller@fnal.gov, or X3019.*